

PATENT
US Serial No. 09/970,453

Attorney Docket No. 02174-00241US

REMARKS

Prior to this amendment, claims 1-18 were pending. Claims 14 – 18 have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1 – 13 are now pending.

Restriction Requirement – Election

The Examiner has imposed a Restriction Requirement stating that the application contains claims directed to two patentably distinct species of the claimed invention. Applicants hereby elect Group I, which includes claims 1 - 13, for consideration on their merits. Applicants have herein canceled claims 14 – 18. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claims 14 - 18 in later filed divisional application.

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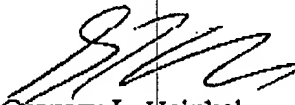
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CONCLUSION

Applicants believe the claims are now in condition for examination and request consideration of their merits. If, in the Examiner's opinion, a telephone conference may be helpful, Applicants' counsel may be contacted at the number below.

Presented with the highest regards
under 37 C.F.R. §1.34(a),



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